

Fellowship Program in Geriatric Psychiatry

A Partnership of Piedmont Geriatric Hospital and Virginia Commonwealth University Dept. of Psychiatry

This outline provides a brief overview of important aspects of the program, and is not meant to convey all details. For anyone interested in establishing similar programs, additional details can be obtained as noted in the last section below.

1) Operated Continuously Since 1987

The Department of Psychiatry at the VCU Medical Center has operated a fellowship training program in Geriatric Psychiatry in partnership with Piedmont Geriatric Hospital since 1987.

2) This is a Voluntary, Post-Graduate, Advanced Training Program (In the Sub-specialty of Geriatric Psychiatry)

This program is not a requirement for individuals to begin practice as a psychiatrist. Those who come into this program have already graduated from a residency in psychiatry. They enter this program voluntarily, devoting additional time to develop advanced, specialized skills with geriatric patients. Completion of the program makes them eligible for subspecialty certification in Geriatric Psychiatry by the American board of Psychiatry and Neurology.

3) Accreditation

The program is accredited by the American Council for Graduate Medical Education.

4) Length/Scope

This is a one-year fellowship. It trains two fellows per year.

5) Includes Rotations at Multiple Training Sites

a) VCU Medical Center –

Inpatient -- Includes experience managing psychiatric patients on the VCUMC Geriatric Psychiatry Inpatient Unit, and in the Geriatric Psychiatry Outpatient Clinic.

They also get training in Palliative Care, Geriatric Internal Medicine, and ECT with Elderly patients.

And serve rotations in the Outpatient Clinics.

b) McGuire VAMC

At the McGuire VA Medical Center, they get specialized training in Neuroradiology, Pain Management, and Dementia.

c) Long Term Care Facilities

The fellows provide consultation and care in community nursing homes.

6) Intensive Focus on Dementia

Since Dementia will be a major part of their practice, the program provides the fellows with an intensive focus on managing all facets of the disease.

7) Emphasis on Multiple, Complex Medical Conditions, Typical with Geriatric Patients

Training also covers the broad range of complex conditions in Geriatric Medicine and Psychiatry, in both Long Term Care and Acute settings. It is the breadth and variety of their experiences at Piedmont, the VCUMC, the VA Hospital, and the Nursing Homes -- with such varied patient populations, clinical service settings, and clinical problems -- that create much of the unique value of the fellowship.

8) Formal Affiliation of PGH and VCUMC – A Genuine Partnership

Piedmont Geriatric Hospital maintains a formal affiliation with VCUMC in support of the fellowship program. Fellows receive concentrated experience and continued training during a 6-month rotation at Piedmont.

9) One Hour Commute to PGH

It has not been a problem for fellows to drive one hour west of Richmond to PGH.

10) A Concentrated Group of Geriatric Patients with Complex Psychiatric and Medical Conditions

Piedmont is a state hospital, providing acute and extended inpatient treatment for 135 patients. Piedmont treats exclusively geriatric patients. This patient population allows the fellows to gain experience in treating the full spectrum of mental disorders, combined with the complex acute and chronic medical illnesses, of elderly patients.

12) Training and Experience in Leading a Team

An important part of the training is instruction and experience in leading interdisciplinary treatment teams.

13) Scholarly Activity

Fellows also participate in scholarly activities: conducting formal, case-based conferences with required literature reviews, and often short-term research projects.

14) Formal Educational Sessions

They attend ongoing formal teaching sessions: weekly didactic presentations by primary faculty, and scheduled teaching sessions with other faculty.

15) Supervisory and Case Report Sessions

Daily case reporting, consultation and feedback from faculty and experienced geriatric specialists.

16) They Provide Teaching Sessions

Fellows provide informal teaching related to individual cases, in teams and on the units, to residents, medical students, and health care professionals from various disciplines.

17) Administrative Role

Fellows participate as a member of the medical staff, addressing both treatment and administrative issues, and attend daily Medical Staff meeting. This provides an opportunity to

evaluate patient response to treatment over an extended period. They also learn about budgets and financial planning, policy development, inter-agency issues, etc.

Benefits

1) To the State:

Prepares specialists in geriatric psychiatry.

18 Graduates from the program, with this Advanced Subspecialty.

56% (10) remain in practice within Virginia .

About 28% (5) moved to other states.

About 17% (3) returned to their home country.

Two are currently serving as full-time geriatric psychiatry specialists on the VCU faculty, and 1 more served there previously.

Many others currently serve on the clinical faculty at VCU, including two staff psychiatrists at PGH and one at Chesterfield CSB.

2) To PGH:

a) Provides Psychiatrist coverage – each fellow leads a treatment team and manages assigned patients.

b) Increases our Recruiting Pool for Psychiatrists.

2 Graduates now fill 2 of our 4 Staff Psychiatrist positions.

c) University affiliation also helps recruitment of professionals in other disciplines.

d) Provides Education for hospital staff.

Each fellow provides formal and informal teaching sessions.

e) Helps develop our professional staff.

Staff who supervise and teach the fellows derive continued learning through their teaching efforts.

Teaching staff also serve as Clinical Faculty at the university; this supports their own professional development while serving the university in a teaching or research role.

f) The assigned Faculty not only provides teaching to fellows, but ongoing education and consultation for the hospital.

3) To the University:

a) Provides Psychiatry coverage during rotations.

b) Strengthens the content of the training, involving multiple sites and broader expertise.

c) Increases the scope of the educational program, bringing additional support.

d) Contributes directly to the university goals of education and service.

e) Increases recruiting pool for clinicians and faculty.

2 prior fellows are currently on the faculty at VCU.

Many are on the clinical faculty.

Resource/Structural Requirements

- 1) Cost of faculty, shared by university and hospital.
- 2) Salary for fellows (at PGY-5 level, a standard amount set by the university, which we supplement by a small amount to cover travel expenses compared to fellows who train only on campus).
- 3) Office space and computer/internet access for fellows.
- 4) Professional staff at the various sites who can qualify as faculty, and serve as clinical supervisors and teachers for the fellows.
- 5) Academic and clinical competence among the faculty at both the university and each teaching site, so they work collaboratively in operating the program.
- 6) Strong coordination of care at both sites.
- 7) Policies and procedures supported by both sites (selection procedures, leave rules, work expectations, etc.).
- 8) Discipline in maintaining teaching and supervisory sessions.
- 9) Solid documentation for accreditation.
- 10) Regular evaluation and feedback to the fellows.
- 11) Solid, timely orientation at each site.
- 12) Extra effort by on-site faculty to deliver, log, and track all teaching sessions as scheduled.
- 13) Consistent and timely quarterly Evaluations.
- 14) Resolution of inevitable conflicts, with corrective interventions and additional teaching and team coordination as needed.
- 15) Feedback and support to those who serve as faculty on site (it is extra work).
- 16) Finding ways to capitalize on the talent, individual contributions, and energy each fellow brings to patient care and staff development.

Time Requirements (to be expected and accepted):

- 1) It is extra work, especially evaluations and extra paperwork.
- 2) Some time devoted to continual recruiting.
- 3) Some adaptation/changeover to each new fellow, as they rotate.
- 4) With continuing replacement of fellows, some conflicts inevitably occur between fellows and others, and have to be resolved.
- 5) Ongoing coaching, advising, mentoring.

MODEL:

- 1) Since our program is accredited, we have a formal description of all parts of the program on file, including descriptions of each rotation, specific learning objectives, teaching sessions provided, assigned faculty and their credentials, etc.
- 2) For any facility exploring the possibility of a university affiliation, we can provide a copy of the program, and would be glad to discuss any details.

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